

Who May Benefit From Assistive Technology?

What is an Assistive Technology Device?

The term "assistive technology device" as defined by the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 means any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. This can include items in areas such as seating, mobility, daily living, and environmental control or devices such as electric or mechanical page-turners, custom-molded seats, switch-activated toys, and hand-held magnifiers.

What is an Assistive Technology Service?

The term "assistive technology service" means any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device including the evaluation of the assistive technology needs of an individual with a disability.

How do I know if a Person May Benefit from Assistive Technology?

In order to make a determination about if or when assistive technology is appropriate, a person or group providing services should ask the following questions:

- Does the person with a disability need assistance in accomplishing tasks that are part of everyday living? Some examples might be:
 - Eating
 - Dressing
 - Walking
 - Seeing
 - Hearing
 - Speaking
 - Learning
 - Working
 - Playing
- What are this person's goals? Some examples might be:
 - To improve reading skills
 - To become competitively employed
 - To be able to express basic feelings and needs
 - To live more independently

- What are all the environments in which this person lives works and plays? What supports and/or resources do they have in those environments? Some examples might be:
 - Family members or caregivers
 - Friends
 - Professional paid staff
 - Employers
 - Nursing home staff
 - Insurance
 - Savings
 - Salaries
 - Transportation
 - Support from family members

How do I help a Person make Decisions about Assistive Technology?

Teams that include the individual should make decisions regarding the appropriateness of assistive technology only after the individual and team has knowledge of and access to a wide variety of devices and their prices, uses, strengths and limitations. The individual should also try various devices in his or her functional settings to evaluate its usefulness to him/her.

The following questions should be answered when making a decision about particular kinds of assistive technology:

- Is there assistive technology available that will address the difficulty a person is having in a task of daily living?
- Does this assistive technology device or devices also address the individual's short or long-term goals?
- Where does this device or devices need to be used? A person may need different devices in different environments.
- What supports and services are available to help the individuals learn to use this device and who will pay for it?
- Has this person had an opportunity to use this device, preferably in the environment in which he or she needs it?

How Do I Help a Person get Quality Assistive Technology Services?

Ensuring that an individual gets the highest quality of services is important to getting the most appropriate devices for them.

The following questions should be asked when assessing the quality of assistive technology services:

- Does the agency (person) providing assistive technology services sell assistive technology devices or in any way benefit from recommending one product over another?
- Does this agency have access to a variety of devices that can be seen and used by the individual prior to recommendations (preferably in the environment where the item is needed or will be used)?
- Does this agency (person) have training and experience in related fields such as education, rehabilitation, speech pathology, occupational therapy and/or engineering?
- Does this agency (person) provide follow-up services such as training, funding assistance, modifications and advocacy ?
- Does this agency (person) know about the wide variety of funding sources in Tennessee and how these resources can be used to purchase assistive technology devices and services?
- Does this agency (person) refer you to and know about other individuals or agencies who provide related services, such as seating and positioning, speech therapy, classroom modifications, or work site adaptations?
- How does this agency (person) keep abreast of the rapid changes in the field of assistive technology, and do they have access to the most current information and devices?
- Does this agency (person) provide services to people with a variety of disabilities and ages, or just to specific disabilities and ages?

Where can I get more information about Assistive Technology Services in Tennessee?

For answers to questions or more information about assistive technology devices or services, please contact the Tennessee Technology Access Project at Toll Free: 800-732-5059; TTY: 615-741-4566; Fax: 615-532-4685 or email: TN.TTAP@state.tn.us. For specific assistive technology assistance, please contact your nearest assistive technology center:

Chattanooga	Jackson
<p>Signal Centers Assistive Technology Center 109 N. Germantown Road Chattanooga, Tennessee 37411</p> <p>Director: Molly Littleton Telephone: (423) 698-8528 ext. 242 Fax: (423) 624-1365 Email: littleton@signalcenters.org Web site: http://www.signalcenters.org/Programs/assistive_technology_center.htm</p>	<p>The STAR Center 1119 Old Humboldt Road Jackson, Tennessee 38305</p> <p>Director: Margaret Doumitt Telephone: (901) 668-3888 TTY: (731) 668-9664 Fax: (901) 668-1666 Email: infostar@starcenter.tn.org Web site: www.starcenter.tn.org</p>
Knoxville	Memphis
<p>East Tennessee Technology Access Center 4918 North Broadway Knoxville, Tennessee 37918-2314</p> <p>Director: Lois Symington Telephone/TTY: (865) 219-0130; Fax: (865) 219-0137 Email: etstactn@aol.com or ettac@esper.com Web site: www.kornet.org/ettac/</p>	<p>Mid-South Access Center for Technology University of Memphis College of Education Room 119 Patterson Hall Memphis, Tennessee 38152</p> <p>Director: Lavonnie Perry Claybon Telephone: (901) 678-1489 TTY: (901) 678-1318 Fax: (901) 678-1489 Email: lclaybon@memphis.edu Web site: http://ceo.memphis.edu/act</p>
Nashville	
<p>Technology Access Center of Middle Tennessee 2222 Metro Center Boulevard, Suite 126 Nashville, Tennessee 37228</p> <p>Director: Bob Kibler Telephone/TTY: (615) 248-6733 Toll Free: (800) 368-4651 Fax: (615) 259-2536 Email: techaccess@mindstate.com Web site: www.tac.ataccess.org</p>	